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## Technology

# Watch: Military's New Laser Weapon Produces Loud 'Screams' From Thin Air

By Shubham Sharma

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**W**e all have seen how direct energy laser weapons can dominate the battlefield. They can take out rogue drones and vehicles in a matter of minutes, but can you imagine a laser weapon producing loud screams out of thin air and stunning a target, rather than killing the person immediately?

The idea may sound a little weird considering the intensity of laser weapons but that's what U.S. military is developing under its Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Development program. As the name suggests, the goal of the program is to develop non-lethal weapons to make sure the target backs off and doesn't do anything in the process.

Typically, stun grenades and sound bombs can be used for a task like this but they all have one common disadvantage — one has to be close enough to the target to throw them.

However, the new weapon, dubbed Laser-Induced Plasma Effect or LIPE system, gets around that problem in a whole new way. It employs a specialized pair of lasers beams to produce a loud scream, and could soon be used to mimic human speech and scare checkpoint breachers from far off, possibly tens of kilometers.

Defense One shared a video of the current prototype while detailing what its so-called "scream" sounds like and how it is produced.

#### The Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Directorate's Experimental Plasma Effects...



As one can see in the clip, the whole thing depends on the working of two specialized lasers. The first, a femtosecond laser, shoots a burst of focused light for about 10-15

seconds and rips electrons from air molecules to create a ball of plasma. The ball acts as a medium and is then hit with another nanolaser, tuned to a very low frequency.

This results in a bright flash of light and the scary noise we hear in the video. Though turning this noise into understandable human speech could be a challenging task, the scientists involved in the project believe the weapon system could be ready in next three years.

"We're this close to getting it to speak to us. I need three or four more kilohertz," David Law, who runs JNLWD's technology division, told Defense One.

Law hopes to improve the system to a level where it could also produce extreme levels of heat, along with noise and light. This way, it would make a complete replacement for non-lethal weapons currently in operation.



US military is working on laser weapons to produce loud screams out of thin air. Pictured, an anti-government protester shouting slogans while standing in front of laser beams emitted by police in the village of Diraz west of Manama. (Photo: REUTERS/Hamad I Mohammed )

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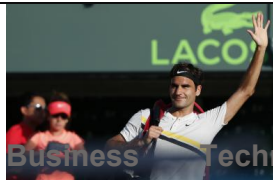


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